



# Idaho's Citizen Commission for Reapportionment

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Soda Springs Public Hearing  
Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>  
Tigard Middle School  
7 pm

**Chairman Andersen** called the meeting to order and asked that the commissioners introduce themselves as follows; **Commissioner Lou Esposito** from Boise, **Commissioner Lorna Finman** from Northern Idaho, **Commissioner Evan Frasure** from Bannock County, **Commissioner Allen Andersen** from Pocatello, **Commissioner Julie Kane** from Lapwai, and **Commissioner George Moses** from Boise. Also present from the staff were **Keith Bybee** and **Cyd Gaudet**.

**Chairman Andersen** briefly explained the commission's responsibilities and time frame and then asked **Commissioner Kane** to explain the legal requirements and guidelines of the commission.

**Commissioner Kane** explained that all states go through this process after every census as the Constitution requires that 1 person = 1 vote. She explained that Idaho can have from 30 to 35 legislative districts and that each district must be equal within a 10% deviation. She indicated that the commission must preserve to the extent possible traditional neighborhoods and local communities of interest. That they must try to avoid drawing oddly shaped districts, and that they must avoid dividing counties as possible. She explained that if counties are divided they must be adjacent to the other county and a highway must join them. She also stated that the commission must honor precinct lines and not attempt to protect incumbents or their respective political parties.

**Chairman Andersen** then referred to the map on the wall, and explained the website and how to get to Maptitude. He suggested that anyone can draft and submit plans, and that the commission would appreciate any input for consideration.

First called to testify was **Senator John Tippetts**. **Senator Tippetts** represents District 31 and was speaking on his own behalf as well as the residents of District 31. He thanked the commission for coming to Soda Springs. He indicated that he doesn't think that it makes sense to have Teton County in the district. He indicated that Caribou, Bear Lake and Franklin County are communities of interest. He believes it is logical to join these three counties with Bannock County. **Commissioner Frasure** asked him if he had any thoughts along the lines of joining with Oneida County. **Senator Tippetts** indicated that Oneida County had previously been a part of the district and seemed to be a good fit.

Next to testify was **Representative Marc Gibbs** from Grace, in District 31. He indicated that there is some community of interest with Teton County however travel there is difficult as you either have to drive through Wyoming or drive through six other legislative districts to get there. He stated that it partly was because of this that the legislature added the requirement of a highway to connect districts together. **Representative Gibbs** indicated that he had spent some time looking at maps and felt the Commission has a daunting task ahead of them.

**Mr. Lloyd Rasmussen**, a Caribou County Commissioner was next to testify. He indicated that the Oneida County Commissioners and the Power County Commissioners want to be in their district. He discussed that Caribou, Franklin, Bear Lake, Oneida, and Power counties have 37,000 people so they need to pull some from Bingham County, which has enough population for 1 district, or Bannock County which does not have quite enough population for 2 districts. He understands that the commission has a difficult job but indicated that they would like to stay in their corner. **Commissioner Frasure** then indicated that as there is no state road that connects Oneida and Power County that

leaves three options, Bonneville, Bannock, or Cassia County. **Mr. Rasmussen** indicated that he felt that Bannock County was probably the best choice as people do their shopping there.

Next to testify was **Senator Dean Mortimer**. He expressed his appreciation to the commission for coming to Soda Springs. He stated that he wanted to testify this evening to tell the commission about the difficulty that District 31 has caused. In his capacity with the Bonneville County Republicans, he stated that in the last 5 years only one or two candidates in district 31 have come all the way to Bonneville County to talk and tell us about themselves. He stated that with the distance, the counties, the ties, and the mountain ranges between Bonneville and this are, it just makes sense that this area needs to stay together and be tied to Bannock County.

**Mr. Trent Clark** then testified that he had been involved in the redistricting process ten years ago and wanted to provide some thoughts on what had happened at that time. **Mr. Clark** cited a poll commissioned by the Pew Foundation and its results were released to the Washington Press Club. This was a survey of Americans under the age of 25 and asked how likely they were to engage in politics in their lifetime, 25% of respondents said it was unlikely they would participate and only 3% said it was likely they would participate, 65% said there was no chance they would participate. Adding those numbers together, our youth is very disaffected with government, and my generation is 100% to blame. This Commission was created to bring honor to the one person, one vote principle and as a consequence will have a positive impact on participation in government. He encouraged the commission not to consider protection of incumbents and encouraged them to take that charge very seriously. He indicated that a 5 to 1 vote on a final plan would not be a complete success and indicated that at 6 to 0 vote would show the citizens that the commission came together. He urged them not to draw districts that they cannot be proud of such as Wallace to Sagle, or Soda Springs to Driggs, or Mountain Home to Horseshoe Bend. He added that the means to drawing the districts are just as important as the ends. He asked that they be able to stand up in front of a class of high school kids and explain the decision making process. He then moved on to talk about county lines because county lines have become sacrosanct to some. He said they are key, but not sacrosanct. He gave the example of the Supreme Court directing the southern states to ignore parish lines in order to protect minority communities of interest. He compared that ruling with the current configuration of the legislative districts and how it splits the Shoshone Bannock reservation between three legislative districts. He rhetorically asked if Idaho has to show a history of discrimination before it protects a community of interest like the tribe, we should not want to go there as a state. He asked them to use their judgment when brought instances like which has higher precedent, county lines or communities of interest that reach across county lines. He pleaded with the Commission to correct the serious error of splitting the tribe between legislative districts. **Commissioner Andersen** remarked that the commission is committed to ensure a plan that is as clean as possible and meets all of the criteria, and to have it done within 90 days. **Commissioner Kane** also remarked that the prior night the commission had received a resolution from Fort Hall to keep the reservation whole. She indicated that the commission is hoping to be within the 15% of plans than are not litigated. **Commissioner Moses** promised the commission will do its level best. **Mr. Clark** then indicated that the current laws are designed to help the commission do their job as easily as possible, and that they should use the 10% deviation judiciously, however they should keep in mind that the census has a margin of error. He also suggested that by drawing clean clear lines that will encourage people to be active in the process. He stated that when he was the Chairman of the Republican Party, it wasn't the Democratic Party that was the enemy; it was apathy from the citizens that undermined the process. **Commissioner Esposito** then encapsulated the discussion by pointing out that what **Mr. Clark** was speaking about the art of redistricting whereas often times people get caught up in the science of redistricting. He further stated that much like art is in the eye of the beholder; it will be up to the people of Idaho to determine if the final plan will be challenged.

Next to testify was **Representative Ken Andrus** who stated he appreciated the commission coming to this area for public input. He indicated that the current plan has some flaws and stated that he believes the current commission will correct the problems with District 31. He suggested that Oneida and Power County being in District 27 has not worked, and suggested that the commission draw a red line from Highway 86 to the Utah border between Cassia, Power and Oneida Counties then make districts there that fit the numbers.

**Mr. R. Scott Workman**, a County Commissioner from Franklin County testified next. He suggested that Bear Lake, Caribou, Franklin and Oneida Counties be together so the people there would be happier and feel better represented. He also indicated that they don't have many ties with Teton County.

**Chairman Andersen** indicated that there no further people signed up to testify however there was time for anyone that wanted to say a few words. He then thanked everyone for coming and for their testimony, and indicated that the commission will try to come up with a plan that will satisfy everyone in the state.

**Commissioner Frasure** then stated that he wanted to thank Idaho Public TV for coming to the hearings and streaming them on the web.

**Chairman Andersen** also advised the audience that the commission is working on their calendar for July and August and will be concluding that and it will then be published. He then adjourned the meeting at 7:57 pm.